THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) : (a) Yes, Sir, 6,668 applications were pending as on 30-11-94.

(b) Registration of newspapers/periodicals is a continuing process. In the case of applications which are complete in all respects, efforts are made for registration certificate to be issued as early as possible. Where applications are not complete, discrepancy letters are issued to applicants to rectify the discrepancies in terms of the provisions of the Press & Registration of Books Act. In all these pending cases, discrepancy letters have been issued to the publishers.

(c) However, Govt. have appointed a Special Review Group to review the provisions of the PRB Act with a view to simplify procedures and speed up process of registration.

Speed Post Services

1903. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Posts by its own lapses is unable to render timely services of speed post items ;

(b) whether Government, despite the increasing popularity of the service amongst the masses, is unable to check the growing lapses ;

(c) whether Government will take steps to ensure proper handling of the speed post items; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) to (d) The popularity of the Speed Post Service of the Department of Post can be guaged from the fact that the number of items have increased from 73,93,716 in 1993-94 to 1,09,34,725 in 1994-95 and the revenue has increased from Rs. 32,00,00,000 in 1993-94 to Rs. 50,12,78,624 in 1994-95. Speed Post delivery is handled by specially designated postmen. In fact, in major centres, apart from the normal designated post office counters, there are specialised offices handling Speed Post. However, in a widespread network occasional lapses in service occur, but remedial steps are always taken to ensure that the service remains at a peak of efficiency.

STD facility at Sonari in Assam

1904. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the Sub-divisional Headquarter town of Sonari in Assam is not connected by independent STD facility till date ;

(b) whether Government are also aware that the present temporary arrangement through the SIBSAGAR exchange is not working at all ;

(c) whether Government are contemplating to install an independent STD facility at Sonari ; and

(d) if so, by when it will be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) and (b) Sonari Sub-divisional Headquarter in Sibsagar SDCA (Short Distance Charging Area) has been connected to the S.T.D. network on reliable medium through Sibsagar the Short Distance Charging Centre for Sonari and the Trunk Automatic Exchange at Jorhat as per the switching and routing plan of Department of Telecommunications.

The STD facility is working satisfactorily.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Telephones to Freedom Fighters

1905. SHRI E. BALANANDAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 420 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 23rd August, 1994 and state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the local authorities in Dhanbad Telecom Circle demand a S.S. deposit from such freedom fighter applicants ; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) No, Sir, there is no SS deposit as such. However, the freedom fighters are required to pay registration fee as applicable to applicants under N-OYT General category, when they register their demand under SWS category for a new telephone connection.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Telephone Complaints

1906. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of complaints received by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, exchange-wise, in each of the last twelve months ;

(b) how many of these complaints were attended the same day, how many the next day, how many the third day and so on ;

(c) the reasons for taking so much time to attend to the complaints ;

(d) whether recording of complaints has been computerised, and if not, by when it is likely to be computerised ; and

(e) whether even after lodging complaints five hundred times, the telephone was not serviced as has been brought out in the news-item appearing in 'Nav Bharat Times' dated 8th September, 1994, if so, the